

ABSTRACT

This research investigates how Generation Z perceives romantic relationship standards on TikTok, focusing on how curated content influences their expectations and emotional responses. TikTok introduces idealised romantic representations that shape how young people interpret love and relationships. This study applies Richard Gregory's Constructivist Theory of Perception to examine how prior experiences, incomplete information, and digital cues influence users' perception of relationship reality. A qualitative phenomenological method was used, involving seven informants aged 18–24 from Jakarta and Bandung. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analysed using Braun and Clarke thematic analysis to identify patterns in how romantic content on TikTok shapes and reinforces romantic ideals. The findings show that informants often internalised unrealistic standards, resulting in insecurity, disappointment, and relational pressure. However, some developed awareness of the curated nature of such portrayals. Further studies may explore emotional well-being impacts, screen time, gender differences, and cultural contexts using quantitative methods to deepen understanding.

Keywords: Generation Z, TikTok, Romantic Relationship, Expectations